III. CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1.   (Currently Amended) Integrated circuit (IC) module apparatus
for dispensing postage for a mail piece comprising:

   a memory for storing first data representative of a value of
      postage funds;

   an interface, operably connected to the memory, for receiving
      selected information concerning the mail piece and
      information concerning a value of the postage, the value of
      the postage funds being a function of the value of the
      postage; and

   a processor, operably connected to the memory and the interface
      for receiving selected information, for encrypting at least
      the selected information to generate second data, the first
      data and the second data being provided to a mail processor
      for creation of a postage indicium indicative of payment of
      the postage[[.]];

   wherein the mail processor generates control instructions to a
      printer for printing the postage indicium in a selected
      location on a mail content such that the postage indicium is
      exposed through a window, the window being on a cover for
      enclosing the mail content.

2.   (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said second data
includes a digital signature.

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3.   (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said memory further includes an encryption algorithm, said selected information being encrypted in accordance with said encryption algorithm.

4.   (Original) The apparatus of claim 3 wherein said encryption algorithm is an RSA algorithm.

5.   (Original) The apparatus of claim 3 wherein encryption algorithm is a digital signature algorithm (DSA).

6.   (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said memory comprises an ascending register for tracking dispensed postage, the memory includes information for determining past postage dispensation.

7.   (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the value of the postage funds is changed in response to a request to purchase postage.

8.   (Currently Amended) Apparatus for generating a content of a mail piece, said mail piece including a cover for enclosing said content, said apparatus comprising:

   an input for receiving data representative of at least said
      content and a selected location for an indicator, said data
      excluding a value of cost of delivery of said mail piece;

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a processor, operatively connected to the input, for computing the cost of delivery of said mail piece based on said data; and

an output, operatively connected to the processor, for generating said content based on said data, and applying at least the indicator indicative of the cost of delivery onto said content at the selected location thereof[[.]];

wherein the content of the mail piece includes address information.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said cost includes postage for delivering said mail piece.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said indicator includes a postage indicium.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said indicator is applied onto said content close to an address.

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein information concerning said cost is capable of being read by a scanner's scanning of said indicator.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said cover is an envelope.

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14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said envelope has at least one window coinciding with said indicator such that at least part of said indicator exposes through the at least one window.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the selected location is a corner of said content.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said processor derives, from said data, information for determining a weight of said content.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said processor derives, from said, information concerning pagination of the content.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said processor derives, from said data, information concerning an address.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said information includes zip code information.

21. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said processor derives, from said data, information for identifying at least one party to which said cost is attributed.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said processor computes said cost based on one or more selected shipping rates.

23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 8 further comprising a memory for storing a database for collecting information based on at least processed mail content.

24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 23 wherein said database includes statistical information based on said cost.

25. (Original) The apparatus of claim 23 wherein said database includes information identifying said mail piece for tracking thereof.

26-81. (Cancelled)

82. (Currently Amended) A system for dispensing postage for a mail piece comprising:

    an IC module comprising a memory for storing first data
        representative of a value of postage funds;

an interface, operably connected to the IC module, for receiving selected information concerning the mail piece and information concerning a value of the postage, the value of the postage funds being a function of the value of the postage;

a processor, operably connected to the IC module and interface for receiving selected information, for encrypting at least the selected information to generate second data;

an output operably connected to the IC module, the interface and the processor, for generating a postage indicium indicative of payment of the postage based on at least the first data and the second data; and

a management information subsystem operably connected to the interface and the output for processing documents, the documents comprising a mail content.

83. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 82 further comprising a computer for storing the management information subsystem.

84. (Original) The system of claim 83 wherein said computer is a personal computer (PC).

85. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 82 further comprising a control element for controlling access to said system for dispensing postage.

86. (Cancelled)

87. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 82 wherein said documents include invoices.

88. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 82 wherein the selected information concerning the mail piece includes address information, the system further comprising an address cleanser for checking address information on the mail piece.

89. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 82 further comprising the interface being adapted to obtain shipping rate information.

90. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 82 further comprising the interface being adapted to communicate with a remote computer for receiving mail processing directions.

91. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 82 further comprising the interface being adapted to establish a connection to a communication network for verifying a delivery status of the mail piece.

92. (Original) The system of claim 91 wherein said communication network includes at least part of the Internet.

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93. (Cancelled)

94. (Cancelled)

95. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~93~~200 wherein said communicator communicates with a certification authority other than the selected recipient to verify access by the selected recipient to the information.

96. (Original) The system of claim 82 wherein said second data includes a digital signature.

97. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 201 further comprising a transmitter for transmitting facsimile information.

98. (Original) The system of claim 97 wherein said facsimile information is encrypted.

99. (Original) The system of claim 97 wherein said facsimile information includes a digital signature for authenticating the facsimile transmission.

100. (Original) The system of claim 82 further comprising a receiver for receiving facsimile information.

101. (Original) The system of claim 100 wherein said facsimile information is encrypted, said receiver includes a decoder for decrypting the encrypted facsimile information. .

102. (Original) The system of claim 100 wherein said facsimile information includes a digital signature, said receiver includes a mechanism for verifying said digital signature.

103. (Original) The system of claim 82 wherein said memory further includes an encryption algorithm, said selected information being encrypted in accordance with said encryption algorithm.

104. (Original) The system of claim 103 wherein said encryption algorithm is an RSA algorithm.

105. (Original) The system of claim 103 wherein said encryption algorithm is a DSA.

106. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 82 wherein said memory comprises an ascending register for tracking dispensed postage, the memory includes information for determining past postage dispensation.

107. (Currently Amended) A method for use in an IC module for dispensing postage for mail piece comprising the steps of:

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storing first data representative of a value of postage funds;

receiving selected information concerning the mail piece and information concerning a value of the postage, the value of the postage funds being a function of the value of the postage;

encrypting at least the selected information to generate second data[[,]]; and

providing the first data and the second data to a mail processor for creation of a postage indicium indicative of payment of the postage[[.]];

wherein the mail processor generates control instructions to a printer for printing the postage indicium in a selected location on a mail content such that the postage indicium is exposed through a window, the window being on a cover for enclosing the mail content.

108. (Original) The method of claim 107 wherein said second data includes a digital signature.

109. (Original) The method of claim 107 wherein said selected information is encrypted in accordance with an encryption algorithm.

110. (Original) The method of claim 109 wherein said encryption algorithm is an RSA algorithm.

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111. (Original) The method of claim 109 wherein said encryption algorithm is ·a DSA.

112. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 107 wherein the value of the stored postage funds is changed ·in response to a request to purchase postage.

113. (Currently Amended) A method for generating a content of a mail piece, said mail piece including a cover for enclosing said content, said method comprising the steps of:

   receiving data representative of at least said content and a selected location for an indicator, said data excluding a value of cost of delivery of said mail piece;

   computing the cost of delivery of said mail piece based on said data;

   generating said content based on said data; and

   applying at least the indicator indicative of the computed cost of delivery onto said content at the selected location thereof[[.]];

   wherein the content of the mail piece includes address information.

114. (Original) The method of claim 113 wherein said cost includes postage for delivering said mail piece.

115. (Original) The method of claim 113 wherein said indicator includes a postage indicium.

116. (Original) The method of claim 113 wherein said indicator is applied onto said content close to an address.

117. (Original) The method of claim 113 wherein said cover is an envelope.

118. (Original) The method of claim 117 wherein said envelope has at least one window coinciding with said indicator such that at least part of said indicator exposes through the at least one window.

119. (Cancelled)

120. (Original) The method of claim 113 wherein the selected location is a corner of said content.

121. (Original) The method of claim 113 wherein information for determining a weight of said content is derived from said data.

122. (Original) The method of claim 113 wherein information concerning pagination of the content is derived from said data.

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123. (Original) The method of claim 113 wherein information concerning an address is derived from said data.

124. (Original) The method of claim 123 wherein said information includes zip code information.

125. (Original) The method of claim 113 wherein information for identifying at least one party to which said cost is attributed is derived from said data.

126. (Original) The method of claim 113 wherein said cost is computed based on one or more selected shipping rates.

127. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 113 further comprising the step of storing a database for collecting information based on processed mail content.

128. (Original) The method of claim 127 wherein said database includes statistical information based on said cost.

129. (Original) The method of claim 127 wherein said database includes information identifying said mail piece for tracking thereof.

130-183. (Previously Cancelled)

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184. (Currently Amended) A method for use in a system for dispensing postage for a mail piece, said system including an IC module, comprising the steps of:

storing first data representative of a value of postage funds in the IC module;

receiving by the IC module selected information concerning the mail piece and information concerning a value of the postage, the value of the postage funds being a function of the value of the postage;

encrypting by the IC module at least the selected information to generate second data;

generating a postage indicium indicative of payment of the postage based on at least the first data and the second data; and

communicating at least financial transaction information with a selected recipient.

185. (Original) The method of claim 184 further comprising the step of controlling access to said system.

186. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 184 wherein the selected information concerning the mail piece includes address information, the method further comprising the step of checking address information on the mail piece.

187. (Original) The method of claim 184 further comprising the step of obtaining shipping rate information.

188. (Cancelled)

189. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~188~~ 184 wherein the communicating step includes the step of communicating with a certification authority other than the selected recipient to verify receipt by the selected recipient of the information.

190. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~188~~ 184 wherein the communicating step ~~including~~ includes the step of communicating with a certification authority other than the selected recipient to verify access by the selected recipient to the information.

191. (Original) The method of claim 184 wherein said second data includes a digital signature.

192. (Previously Presented) A method for sending a mail piece comprising the steps of:

indicating on the mail piece an indicia including information concerning a content in the mail piece; and

providing on the mail piece an indicator for affirming that the content is included in the mail piece, said indicator causing a processor of the mail piece to inform a third party of the information while the mail piece is being sent.

193. (Original) The method of claim 192 wherein the content includes a payment.

194. (Original) The method of claim 193 wherein the information includes an amount of the payment.

195. (Original) The method of claim 192 wherein the third party is an addressee of the mail piece.

196. (Original) The method of claim 192 wherein the indicator includes a digital signature.

197. (Original) The method of claim 192 wherein the information is encrypted.

198. (Original) The method of claim 192 wherein the information is incorporated in a postage indicium.

199. (Currently Amended) A system for dispensing postage for a mail piece comprising:

   an IC module comprising a memory for storing first data representative of a value of postage funds;

   an interface, operably connected to the IC module, for receiving selected information concerning the mail piece and information concerning a value of the postage, the value of

the postage funds being a function of the value of the postage;

a processor, operably connected to the IC module and the processor, for encrypting at least the selected information to generate second data;

an output, operably connected to the processor, for generating a postage indicium indicative of payment of the postage based on at least the first data and the second data; and

an address cleanser, operably connected to the interface, the processor and the output, for checking address information on the mail piece[[.]];

wherein the selected information concerning the mail piece includes address information.

200. (Currently Amended) A system for dispensing postage for a mail piece comprising:

an IC module comprising a memory for storing first data representative of a value of postage funds;

an interface, operably connected to the IC module, for receiving selected information concerning the mail piece and information concerning a value of the postage, the value of the postage funds being a function of the value of the postage;

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a processor, <u>operably connected to the IC module and the processor,</u> for encrypting at least the selected information to generate second data;

an output, <u>operably connected to the processor,</u> for generating a postage indicium indicative of payment of the postage based on at least the first data and the second data; and

a communicator, <u>operably connected to the interface, the processor and the output</u> for communicating <u>at least financial transaction</u> information with a selected recipient.

201. (Currently Amended) A system for dispensing postage for a mail piece comprising:

an IC module comprising a memory for storing first data representative of a value of postage funds;

an interface, <u>operably connected to the IC module,</u> for receiving selected information concerning the mail piece and information concerning a value of the postage, the value of the postage funds being a function of the value of the postage;

a processor, <u>operably connected to the IC module and the interface,</u> for encrypting at least the selected information to generate second data;

an output, <u>operably connected to the IC module, the interface and the processor,</u> for generating a postage indicium indicative of payment of the postage based on at least the first data and the second data; and

a transmitter, operably connected to the interface, the processor and the output, for transmitting facsimile information.

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